



February 14, 2019

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Sanchez, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of Basic Rights Oregon, I respectfully request your support for SB 608 to end no-cause evictions after the first 12 months of occupancy and set an annual limit on rent increases.

Basic Rights Oregon works to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Oregonians experience equality. Throughout Oregon, LGBTQ families, like other Oregonians, are struggling to make ends meet. Every week we hear stories of LGBTQ community members struggling with housing security. It's heartbreaking. Too often no-cause evictions are used to retaliate, discriminate, and displace. This legislation is an important step to help end housing discrimination many Oregonians experience, including transgender people living across the state.

Currently, some landlords are using no-cause evictions to avoid the simple legal process for removing tenants and are terminating leases to raise rents or even worse, discriminate against certain tenants. They are also used to retaliate against tenants who ask for necessary repairs, making renters afraid to request basic repairs needed to keep their homes safe and habitable. Evictions for no reason and extreme rent increases cause immense financial hardship on working families that can force them to deplete their savings, resulting in homelessness and the cycle of poverty. Moreover, these practices disproportionately impact families of color, worsening inequities and pulling communities apart.

In addition, families across Oregon are experiencing extreme rent increases that are forcing them out of their homes and communities. Finding a new affordable apartment near their current home is a serious challenge in our state's highly competitive rental markets. Evictions and economic displacement impact us all by putting more economic burden on our communities through increased demands on social services, shelters, and hospitals when families become homeless and other costs associated with the disruption caused by housing instability. By contrast, stable homes promotes educational opportunity for children and economic opportunity for families – allowing Oregonians to save for a house, pursue new employment options, and open new businesses.

SB 608 will protect housing stability by prohibiting the use of no-cause evictions after the first 12 months of occupancy and by setting an annual limit on rent increases.

We hope that you will vote yes in support of SB 608. Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Nancy Haque*  
*Executive Director*